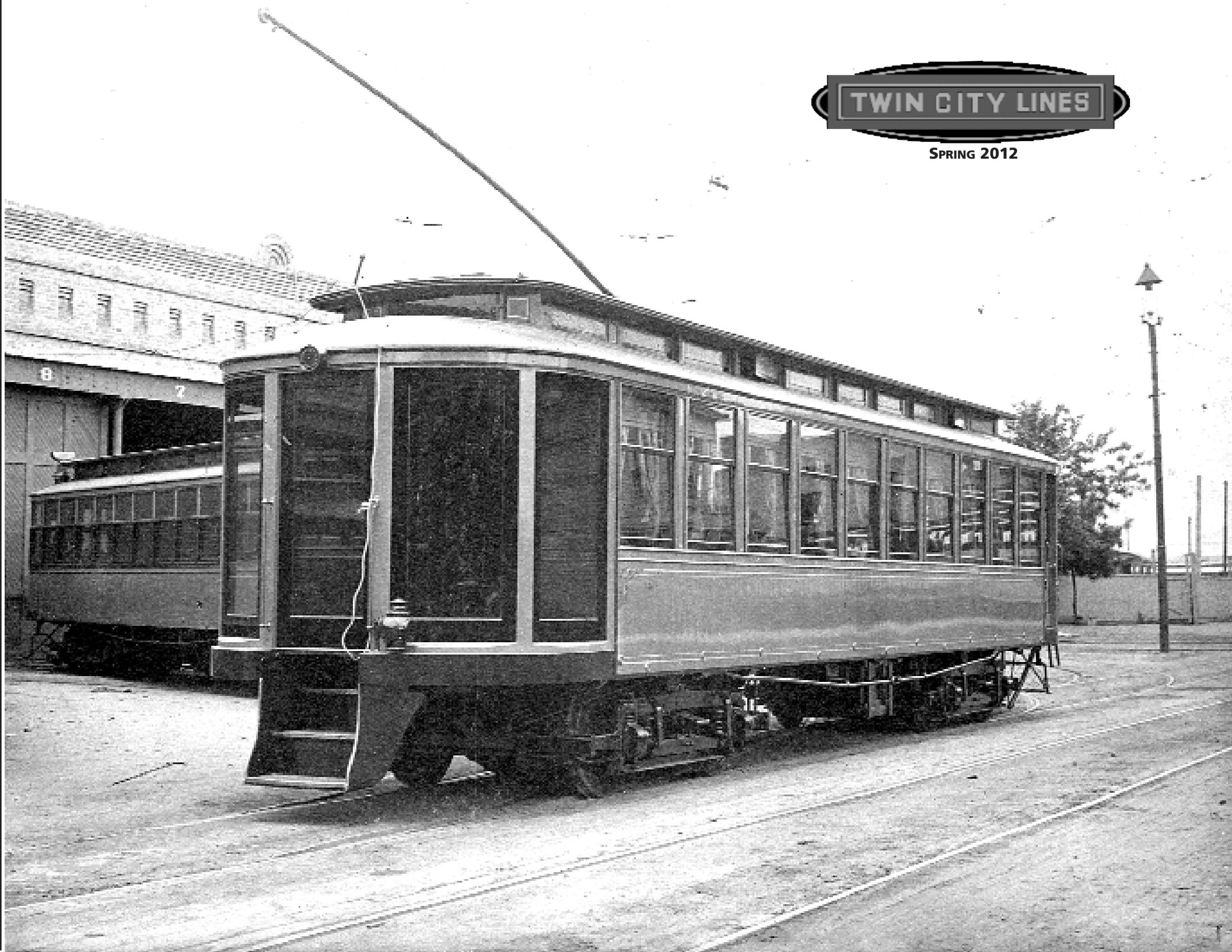


TWIN CITY LINES

SPRING 2012





## TWIN CITY LINES

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The Minnesota Streetcar Museum operates the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line in Minneapolis and the Excelsior Streetcar Line in Excelsior. Its mission is to preserve Minnesota's electric railway heritage.

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# See the GAMES

**HAMLIN**  
VS.  
**MACALASTER**  
AT HAMLIN  
SAT. OCT. 22, 2:00 P.M.

**CONCORDIA**  
VS.  
**ST. THOMAS**  
AT ST. THOMAS  
SAT. OCT. 22, 2:00 P.M.

**STREET CARS**  
take you direct to  
**GAMES**

● NO TRAFFIC TO FIGHT ● NO PARKING SPACE TO HUNT



## CORRECTIONS AND NEW INFO

The work car issue generated some good feedback.

Loren Martin called to say that as a child in 1951 he watched one of the Thew electric shovels removing track on the Columbia Heights line north of 37th and Central. The crane took power from the overhead wire by means of a "stinger", a long wood pole with a wire attached to it and a metal hook that hung from the overhead. Look closely at the photo. The stinger rises straight up from the right rear of the shovel's cab. Another wire was clamped to a track rail to complete the circuit. Loren remembers that the shovel made little noise except the clattering of gears as it worked.



**Front and rear covers:** In 1898, TCRT inaugurated its in-house streetcar building program with a sumptuous private car for Thomas Lowry. It is shown in front of 31st Street Station, where it was built. The rear cover shows the steel pilot and marker lights added in 1908 for operation to Lake Minnetonka. For more on the private car, see page 23.

**Inside front cover:** The overhead wire on the Emerald and University wye at the Minneapolis-St. Paul city limits has fallen, and a wire truck has responded make repairs. For more on service trucks, see page 12. Minneapolis Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.



Russ Olson wrote: "One comment: page 16 shop interior photo; that is not the machine shop. Machine shop see Electric Railways of Minnesota page 293. Your photo is in the Structural portion (east half) of the Forge and Structural Shop looking south. That large machine just right of center is a Combination Shearing & Coping Machine according to the 1913 Electric Railway Journal."

Russ questioned the location of the wire car #3 photo on page 9. The caption that placed it near Brookside Avenue is clearly wrong, because there was no crossover there. There were crossovers at Deephaven Junction (where the Deephaven line diverged), at Glen Lake and at Fair Oaks. It could be any of those places.

More than one person noted that in the inside front cover photo, crane #50 is missing the protective wood box to prevent hitting the trolley wire accidentally and providing a path to ground. We don't know why, but the same car appears with the box on page 10. Protective boxes appear in all the other crane and electric shovel photos.

Loren Martin and Jim Vaitkunas both noticed the hose jumpers hanging from the bottom of crane car #21 on page 4.

Jim Vaitkunas emailed several questions which Russ Olson helpfully answered.

Q: Page 6. On supply car No. 1, looks like the motorman is dressed for cold weather, eh? On this supply car, is that a rheostat handle next to his left arm? Rheostat must have been under the car somewhere?

A: Rheostat was under the car floor at the bulkhead. In 1892 TCRT moved them to a cabinet on the front platform together with the controller, etc.

Q: Page 6. On work car No. 2 (bottom), the front door seems narrower than on later gate cars. Also note the wood guard bars on the inside over the window openings to prevent materiel stacked high from going thru the window. You can see these window guards on the following photos as well.

A: Streetcar Classes A thru C all had a narrow motorman's cab door (short platforms). Class D began the wide

motorman's cab door (longer platforms).

Q: Page 14. Boy, No. 58 is a fascinating piece of machinery. The bottom photo shows some kind of V-shaped shield over the smoking cauldron of whatever the stuff is that Thermite uses--I wonder what that was for? You can see some white hot liquid Thermite material coming out of the bottom on the car into a portable vessel so the workers can take it to the joint.

A: I think the V-shaped appendage was for dissipating the exhaust fumes. I had understood that the molten Thermite could be poured directly into the mold from the cupola car.

Q: Page 16. Upper left photo. Are those the coal stoves that were mounted under the floor of the car sitting on the shop flat?

A: Sure looks like it. Could be this is where the heaters were manufactured.

Q: Page 16. The lower left photo looks west with the coal bin on the other side of the 4-wheel gondola, correct? That gantry for coal loading is fascinating. What was it used for?

A: Yes, that is the Coal Bin. According to the shop drawing this was a traveling overhead clamshell shovel on gantry, for coal.

Q: It looks like most of the flat work cars and a few of the crane cars had that tall arch-bar truck.

A: This was the Twin City #7 Work Car truck used on many of the service cars (all types).

I neglected to credit Russ Olson for his invaluable help putting together the work car issue. He remains the final authority on Minnesota streetcar history. Many thanks, Russ.

## GRAB BAG ISSUE

Since Twin City Lines started in 2007, we've tried to fill it with large feature stories on all aspects of Minnesota streetcar history. For this issue we'll take a breather, and use up lots of smaller items that have been accumulating. Think of it as an all-appetizer meal.

## Boys vs Streetcars

-Bill Snyder

This story was originally published in the Summer 1997 Fargo Central High School alumni association newsletter. It has been edited for length.

Every mean kid in my neighborhood loved the streetcars. I loved them, too. Besides being the basic transportation system for Fargo-Moorhead, the yellow vehicles were part of every boy's sporting life.

As we grew up in Fargo, we explored things to put on the streetcar tracks. Pennies were flattened. A penny would buy a lot of candy, so the flattening procedure was only tried a few times. I can't recall any kid putting more than a nickel on the tracks; it was too expensive.

On the 4th of July we put strips of cap-gun caps on the rails, but it was more fun to shoot them in guns than to waste them under a streetcar. I heard tales of track torpedoes, those bombs that the railroad workers used to signal the engineer to stop his train, being put on the streetcar tracks, but never really saw it happen. The torpedoes carried a

powerful explosive, and we kids used to guess if they would derail a streetcar when they exploded.

The streetcars of my 1920s were the target of many juvenile pranks. When we tugged hard on the trolley rope, the tram could be stopped dead in its tracks. "Pulling the trolley" was the number one stunt. The trolley rope fascinated all the boys. They loved to run out in back of the streetcar, grab the rope, jerk it down to one side and watch the sparks fly. The lights in the car went out, the car stopped dead and the motorman usually opened the door and chased the kid. Rarely did he catch the culprit.

The best place to pull a trolley was where the car turned a corner, because the car moved at a very slow pace. At night the kid would hide in the bushes, run out after the car slowed for the corner, catch the trolley rope and jerk it off the wire. The trick was to keep the motorman from seeing you run out toward the car. If he did, he usually stopped the car, bolted out the door and chased you. Some of the younger motormen were really fast.

But at the corner of 2nd Avenue and 14th Street South, a kid could pull the trolley by remote control. Every car





Left: Every 15 minutes, a pair of Birney cars left downtown Fargo for the south loop line. One ran the loop clockwise, the other counter clockwise. North Dakota State University collection. Above: Here's a good view of the boys' favorite playthings--the trolley pole, rope and retriever, and the rear fender, perfect for sneaking a ride. Clay County Historical Society collection.

had a retriever at both ends, a spring-loaded reel that took up the rope slack as the pole traveled along the wire. There were high and low spots in the wire and the slack was automatically taken up or played out by the reel.

Our gang invented this system: the puller would run out and grab the rope and pull enough rope to make a half hitch loop around the canister that held the reel. The half hitch would hold the

rope so that when the trolley got to 5th Avenue where it turned east it hit a high spot in the overhead wire. The pole would leave the wire, the lights would go out and the car would halt.

Winter time brought a new problem for the streetcar operators. Some of the cars were double-ended, with a fender, which we called the "cow catcher", on both ends of the car. It was an invitation to run out, ride on the back end fender and avoid the seven cent fare.

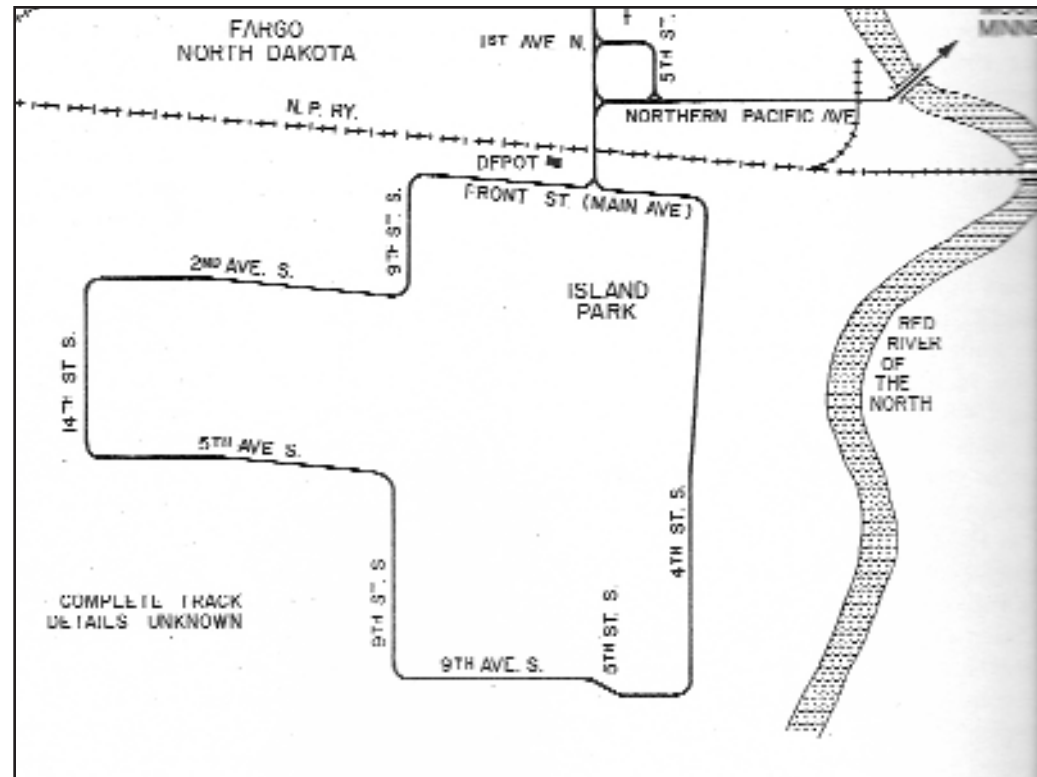
In winter when the streets were covered with snow, it was possible to run out and grab hold of the streetcar frame, and by putting your feet in tandem on the icy track, crouch down and slide along behind the car. Sliding with one's feet on the snowy street instead of the rails was hazardous. If one's shoes hit a bare spot on the pavement, it might jerk your feet out from under you and you were at the mercy of the automobile traffic behind the streetcar. It didn't work very well in the downtown area and most rides were abandoned when downtown came into view.

The streetcars in Fargo operated mostly on very flat land, but the St. John's Hospital hill on 4th Street was a good place for Halloween pranks. Every year the tracks were greased, one way or another. The northbound car could negotiate the hill with no trouble, it was downhill all the way. But the southbound car couldn't handle the greasy track.

Our Halloween gang, a makeshift group each year, enjoyed pushing over outdoor toilets, pulling steps off high porches, distributing the contents of garbage cans on lawns and pulling trolleys.

The street railway people were aware of the Halloween trolley pullers, so they unhooked the ropes from the reels and put them on top of the car and out of reach. With this in mind, one year our gang of ruffians staged a bonfire on the tracks in front of a house on 14th Street between 4th and 5th Avenues, just after the northbound car

The Fargo south loop line. The St. John's Hospital hill was on 4th Street. Map from Electric Railways of Minnesota.





turned the corner.

To build a bonfire on the single track in the few minutes between the northbound and southbound cars took planning. A time study was made, and it was determined that the best time would be right after the southbound car turned onto 5th Avenue. By starting it then, the fire could be well underway when the northbound car came squealing around the corner.

Our engineering committee decided to build a large box with two by four handles. We scavenged a packing case from an appliance store's garbage pile. It was filled with quick combustibles like paper, leaves and twigs. The air draft was neatly engineered into the design so it would burn with fierce intensity after being soaked with kerosene and ignited. A few shovels of coal were added at the last moment to make the fire last long enough to block a couple of streetcars.

Halloween night arrived and the fire bombers carried the fire crate three blocks from the construction site to the chosen conflagration site. When the southbound car passed, we lugged it out onto the rails, poured on the kerosene, added some chunks of lumber and tossed in a book of matches.

Boom! It worked great. The fire blossomed quickly and the flames shot up to the overhead wire. We scooted away to hide in the bushes and watch the whole affair. Around the corner came the northbound car. The motorman bounded from the car and ran to a nearby house to call the fire department. With screaming sirens, the fire trucks arrived and quickly extinguished the fire. Smoke lingered for awhile in the cool October air.

The firemen got stuck with the cleanup and the streetcar schedule was only slightly disrupted. There were no police radios in those days, so we were long gone before the cops arrived. We snuck away through back yards to gather a block away and celebrate.

## Crashes and other surprises

**-Kirt Blewett**

Kirt was a longtime MSM member.

I was employed by Twin City Lines as a motorman-conductor working various car lines from 1945 through 1951. Here are some of my unusual experiences encountered while working.

During the winter of 1946-47, I was working a night run on Glenwood-4th Avenue. Inbound on Glenwood, I had just crossed Lyndale Avenue starting up the grade towards the Great Northern overpass, when I felt the car starting to ride rather rough. I made the turn onto 1st Avenue North with no problem and proceeded to 6th Street. As there was no regular streetcar traffic north of 6th Street, the switch was normally lined for 4th Avenue cars to turn right onto 6th Street.

As I neared 6th Street, I saw the switch was lined in its normal position. As I entered the switch, the car went straight instead of turning. I went to the rear platform and backed up enough to clear the switch. After

returning to the front, I observed the switch was lined straight. I threw the switch for 6th Street and started up. Again I went straight. Realizing something must be drastically wrong, I discovered the lead axle had broken in the axle cap which allowed the broken part of the axle to tilt down causing the right wheel to tilt in enough to let the wheel flange run about two inches off the inside of the rail which allowed the flange to act like a switch rod and throw the switch.

I explained to my passengers that the car was disabled and was unable to proceed. After issuing emergency transfers, I discharged my passengers, and pulled the car down to 5th Street. Securing the car, I walked over to 5th and Hennepin and informed the starter of the problem. He phoned Nicollet Station and told them of the situation. I was instructed to leave the car sit, return to the station, pick up another car and finish the run. Luck was with me that night because I could have derailed anywhere between Lyndale and 6th Street.

Another incident occurred one evening on Glenwood-4th Avenue. I

was northbound on 6th Street at 3rd Avenue S. I started up on a green traffic signal when the front pair of wheels hit something and derailed. I was able to back up and the wheels came back on the rails. What I found was a gear case bolt wedged in the flange way of a switch frog. I was able to remove the bolt and proceed.

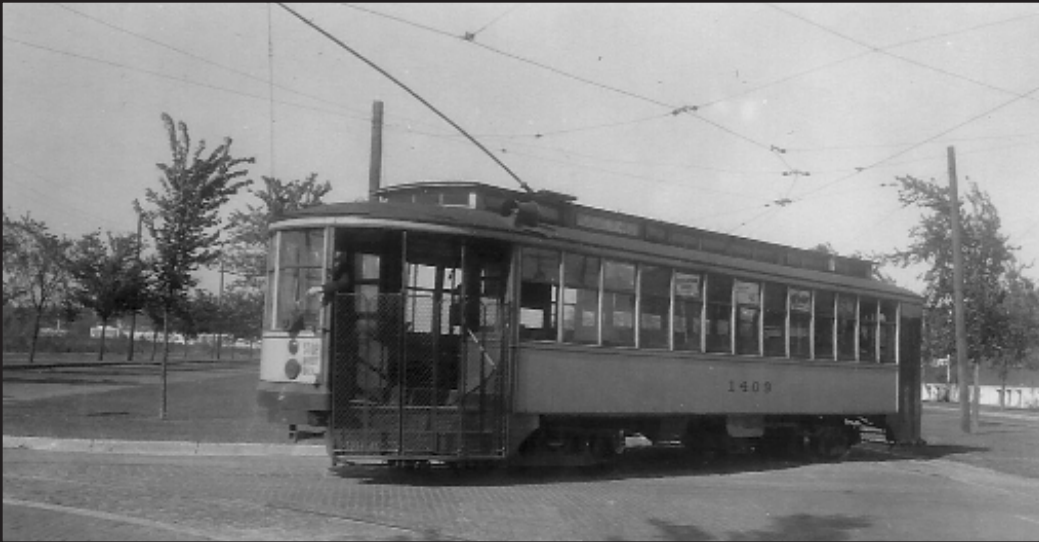
One winter night on Glenwood-4th Avenue, there had been a thaw which had made the rails very slick. I was inbound on 4th Avenue at about 15th or 16th Street. Due to 4th Avenue being a narrow street, there was no room for autos between streetcars and parked cars. During the winter, it was standard practice to keep a sharp lookout for exhaust coming from a parked car, figuring a driver must pull out in front of you. This time the auto in question was parked first out at the intersection requiring no jockeying to pull out, which the driver did right in front of me.

As soon as I saw him, I applied my brakes, but with touchy rail, the streetcar picked up her feet and slid, hitting the auto's rear, knocking it down the street ahead of me. The driver had enough sense to keep going until I came to a stop, avoiding another rear ender. After obtaining the necessary info, the auto driver was on his way. My streetcar's fender was knocked off, so I dragged it across the street and left it on the sidewalk. On my return trip I stopped, picked up the fender and put it on the rear platform to return to the station as this was my last trip before pulling in.

On Sundays, Nicollet-2nd Street NE operated one man. I caught a Sunday day run on Nicollet with an 1166-series car, one of my favorite types. I was southbound around 41st or 42nd Street when a southbound auto with one of those wrap around rear bumpers passed and cut me off so short the bumper caught between my front doors. I applied the brakes, which brought the car to a halt along with the streetcar. The driver could not figure out why his auto had stopped. Before I could alight, he put his car in low gear,

**A Glenwood-4th Avenue car turns from 1st Avenue N. onto 6th Street. John Runk photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.**





**A North West Terminal streetcar backs into the wye at Broadway and Stinson.**

gunned the engine, and tore the front half of my door off. This made me rather unhappy, because it meant a car change on my return trip.

One evening I was working Glenwood-4th Avenue southbound. Between Nicollet and 2nd Avenue S. a northbound auto sideswiped the streetcar. I stopped as did the auto's driver. His first remark was "Why didn't you move over when you saw me coming?" I looked at him and started to laugh. I told him I run on a track and have to go where the track goes. He grumbled, got back in his car and took off. That was

the end of it.

Before the North West Terminal line was discontinued, there was two-man service Monday through Friday and one-man service on Saturdays, with no Sunday service. I was working a Saturday run that made one trip to North West Terminal. The car following me was a pullin and scheduled to leave ahead of me, so I backed into the wye far enough to allow him to wye ahead of me. There was only one problem. I backed a little too far and my trolley ran off the wire.

The dead end for the wire was one of the Y type going to a pole on each side of the street. When the wheel hit the insulator, the trolley pole jumped and went up over the pulloffs. This made it impossible to pull the trolley pole down by the rope. As the pullin car hadn't departed as yet, the two of us managed to get me back under the wire. I climbed up on the roof and held the pole against the wire and he moved the car forward enough that I was back under the wire.

One winter I was working a run on Bryant-Johnson and had a PCC car. It was during the evening rush hour and I had a standing load northbound leaving the loop. In front of the Great Northern Station there were two safety islands for streetcar passengers. The junction of Nicollet and Hennepin Avenues was north of these islands. Southbound vehicle traffic for Nicollet turned before the islands. Southbound vehicle traffic for Hennepin went straight between the islands and the GN station.

This night, a truck driver missed the turn to go up Nicollet and cut over south of the islands right in front of me. I floored the brake pedal and just missed the truck. The standees not holding on joined me on the front platform. Had I had a standard car that night, I don't think I would have

missed the truck resulting in considerable damage and possible injuries.

One winter night I was working a night run on Rice-South St. Paul. I was southbound on Rice Street and had stopped for the traffic signal at Como. I heard a crash sound from the rear and went to the back platform to see what had made the noise. An auto couldn't stop on the icy street and rear ended my streetcar.

Another cold winter night I was also working Rice-South St. Paul and was to wye at 6th Street in South St. Paul. The wye was located off street on the east side, which required backing across the northbound track and driving lane to clear. Due to frosted over windows, visibility was very limited. I would watch for approaching headlights, and seeing none would back into the wye.

I started to back up when I caught sight of headlights coming. I immediately stopped on the north track but clear of the driving lane. The next thing I knew, I was flying across the platform and landed in the stepwell. I was hit by a jack knifing semi trailer. The driver, believing I was about to cross in front of him, tried to stop on the icy pavement causing the trailer to jack knife and hit the rear of my streetcar. Lucky for me, I sustained only a couple of bruises.

**The safety islands in front of the Minneapolis Great Northern Depot on Hennepin Avenue. Bob Schumacher photo.**



**Backing into the wye at Concord and 6th Street in South St. Paul.**







**The East Shore Park stop on the Mahtomedi branch north of Willernie. Harlow Callendar photo.**

One night I was making my last trip east on Randolph-Hazel Park and was on East 7th Street about half way between Duluth Station and White Bear Avenue when I noticed a westbound auto approaching. The closer the auto came the closer it came to the center of the street. When I was a couple of car lengths away I saw it was foul of my track. I braked and blew the whistle, but the auto kept coming straight into the left front of the streetcar.

A yellow cab stopped and I asked him to radio his dispatcher to call the police and an ambulance. A woman passenger in the auto suffered a leg injury. I got her on board the streetcar to keep warm until help arrived. Emergency crews had to remove the driver. A newspaper item the next day stated the driver apparently skidded on icy pavement. This was false because the driver made no effort to avoid the collision and kept coming at an angle that took him into the path of my streetcar. Also, the pavement was not icy. His passenger told me and the police that he had been drinking.

One night I was working Randolph-Hazel Park with a late Mahtomedi trip. My last passenger got off in Willernie, so I was alone to Mahtomedi. I was about halfway there when my headlight picked up an obstacle in my path. It was a clothesline tied to both the rail and the trolley wire. I cut the rail end with the switch rod, but how to get the rope off the wire? I thought for a moment and came up with a solution. I pulled the car ahead until the trolley wheel was almost to the rope. Then I set a little brake, put the controller on one point, and inched the car ahead. When the wheel hit the rope, it dropped down slightly, drew an arc and burned the rope off. I picked up the rope, went on to the end of the line,

wyed, reported in and headed for Duluth Station.

One icy winter night, I was again working Randolph-Hazel Park. I was eastbound on the long East 7th Street hill, and had stopped for the traffic light at Arcade. As I started up, I noticed a westbound auto approaching out of control on the icy pavement. Not knowing where the auto would wind up, I figured the best thing was stop until the auto went by. Well, he didn't make it by me, sideswiping the left side of my streetcar which did stop him. The driver told me he was on ice and there wasn't a thing he could do to stop until he hit me. This was the night the police blocked off the 7th Street hill after an Arcade-Maryland bus went

down the hill sideways.

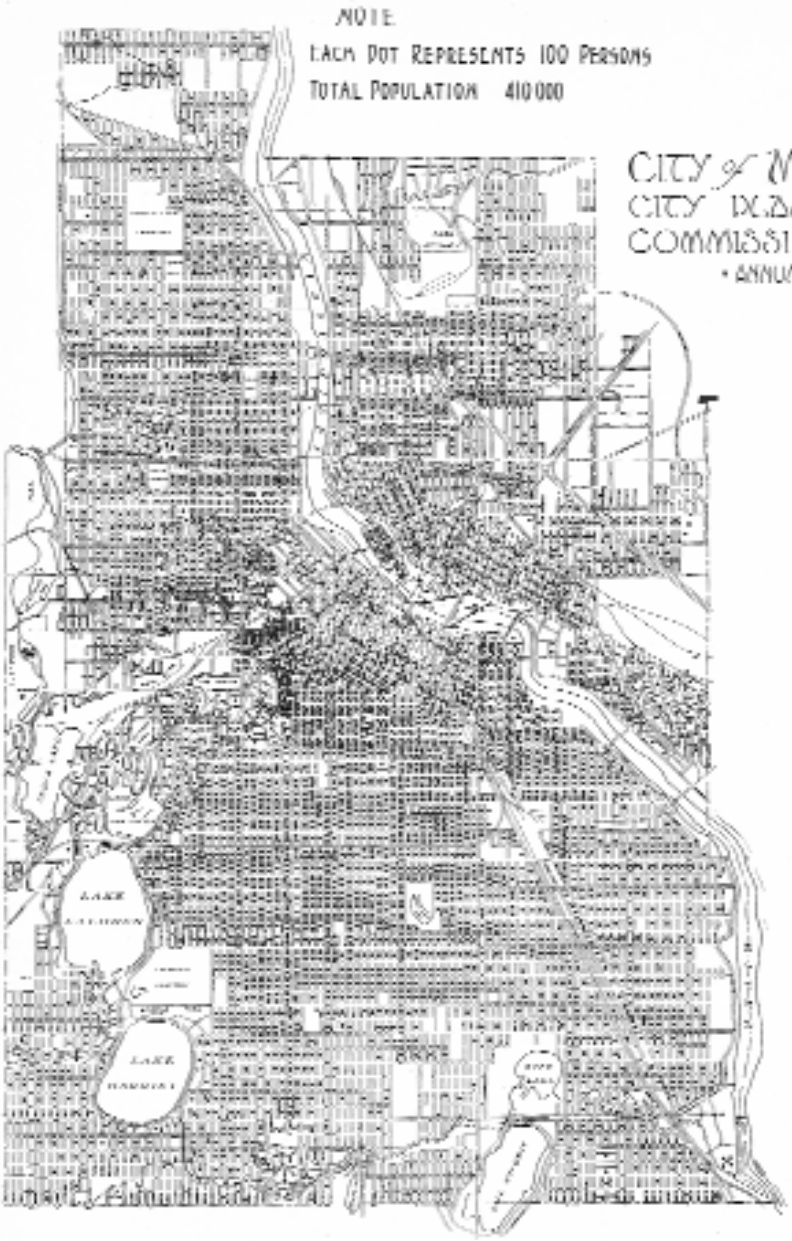
One night I was working as a motorman on Como-Harriet. We were westbound on 31st Street nearing Irving Avenue and the start of the Lake Harriet right of way. Just as I was about to enter the curve at Irving, I caught sight of an auto stuck in the vehicle trap and was able to stop before colliding with the auto. How to get him out and back on the street was the problem. I asked the driver if he had a tire chain in his truck and he did. I pulled as close as I could, hooked one end to his bumper and the other to the streetcar's drawbar, backed up and pulled him out. He was grateful, for we saved him a towing bill and a possible police ticket.

**The entrance to the Como-Harriet private right of way at 31st and Irving. The vehicle trap Kirt refers to is in front of the streetcar, but appears to be missing from the other track. Edwin Nelson photo.**

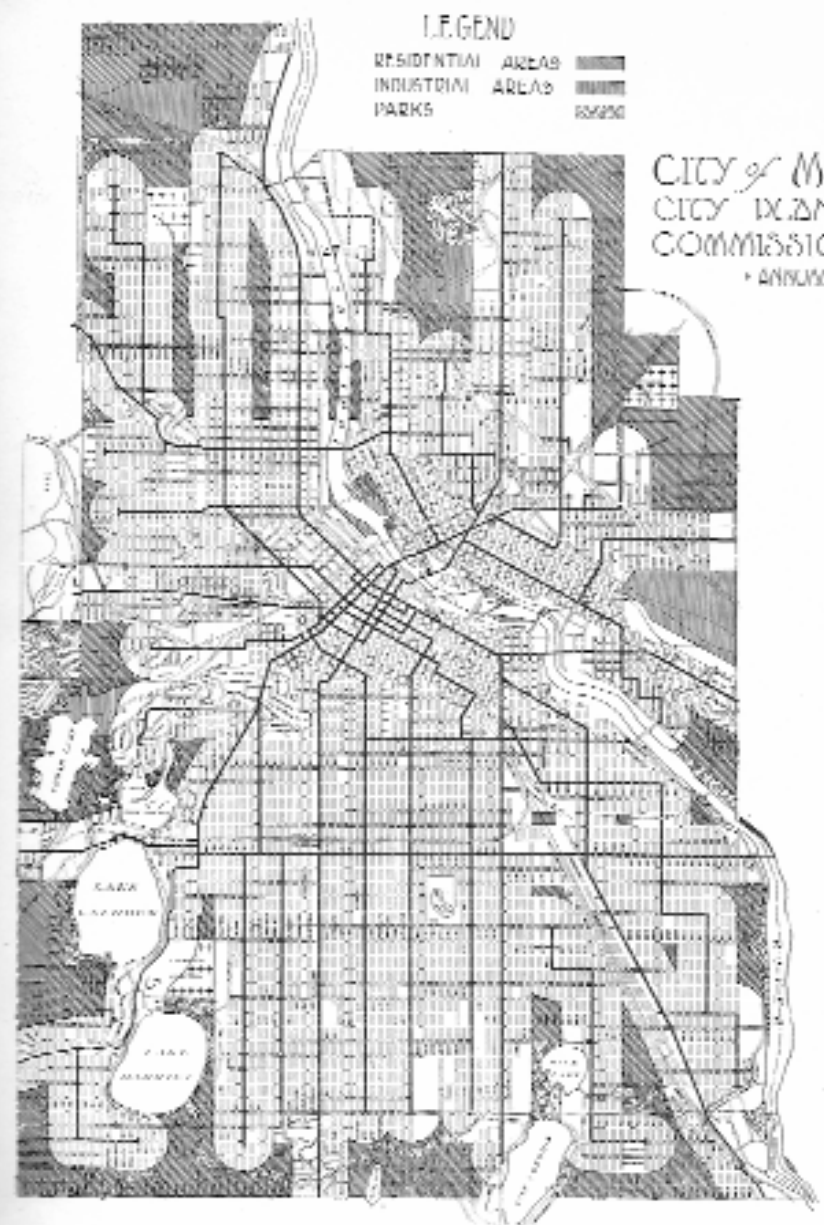




# DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION



# AREAS UNSERVED BY TRANSIT LINES



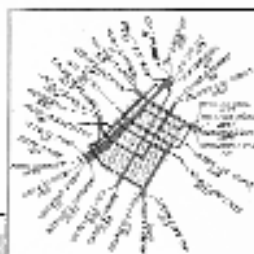
These maps from a 1925 City of Minneapolis planning study show where residents lived, how many lived within a quarter mile of a streetcar line, and (on the following page), ridership and the number of streetcar passengers leaving downtown by line and by street. Thanks to Jason Podany of Metro Transit for sending them in.

# TRANSIT LINE VOLUME DIAGRAM

SHOWING RELATIVE MAXIMUM  
HOURLY NUMBER OF PASSENGERS  
OUTBOUND FROM THE LOOP

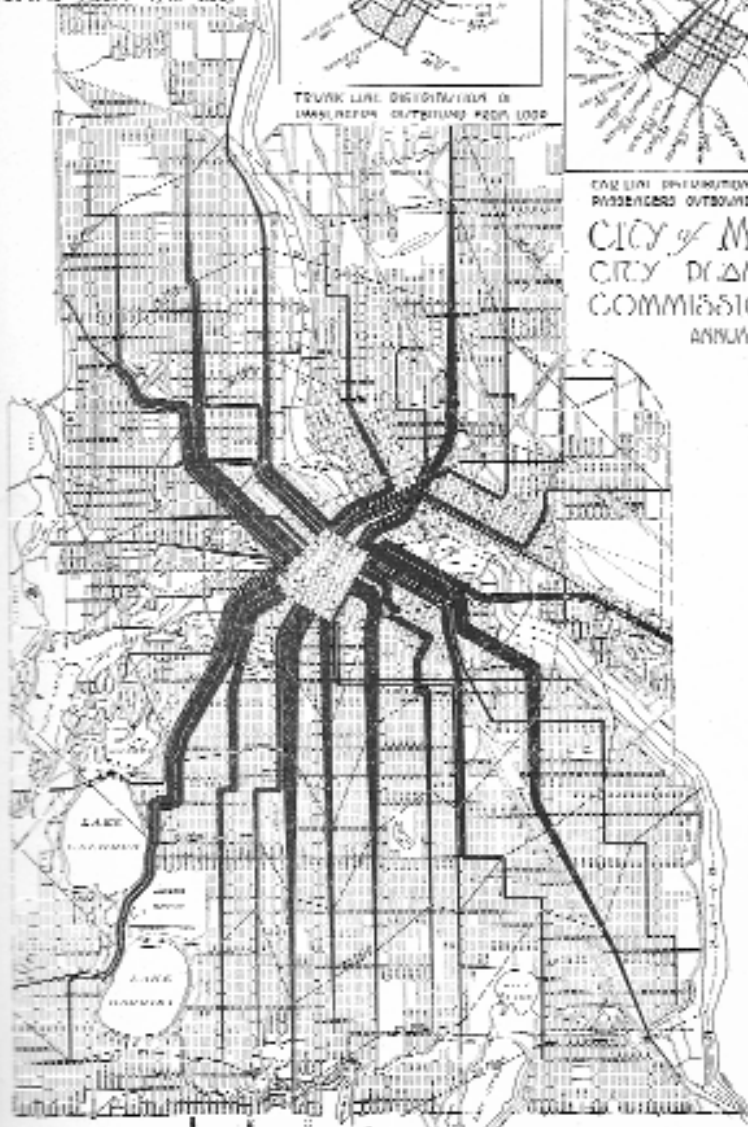


TRUNK LINE DISTRIBUTION OF  
PASSENGERS OUTBOUND FROM LOOP



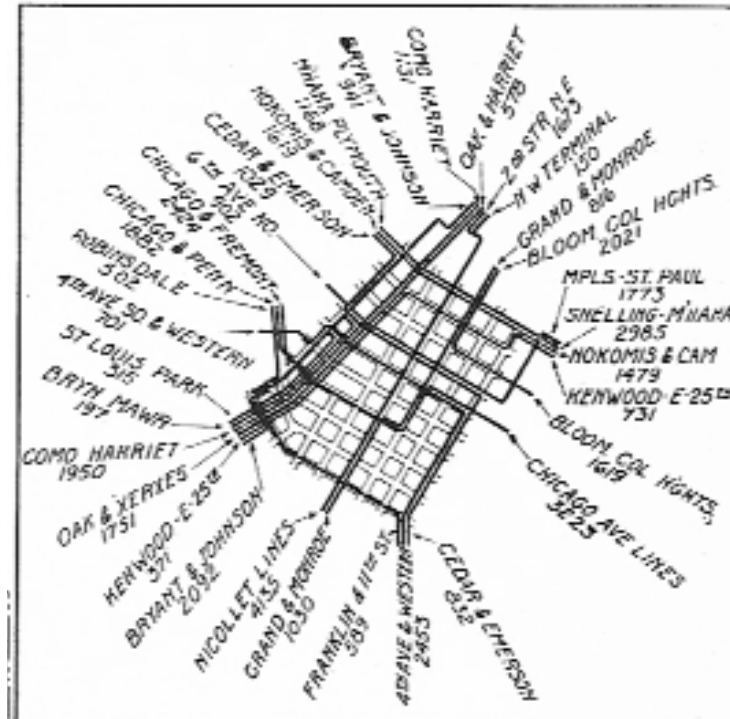
CAR LINE DISTRIBUTION OF  
PASSENGERS OUTBOUND

CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS  
CITY PLANNING  
COMMISSION (1922-1924)  
ANNUAL REPORTS

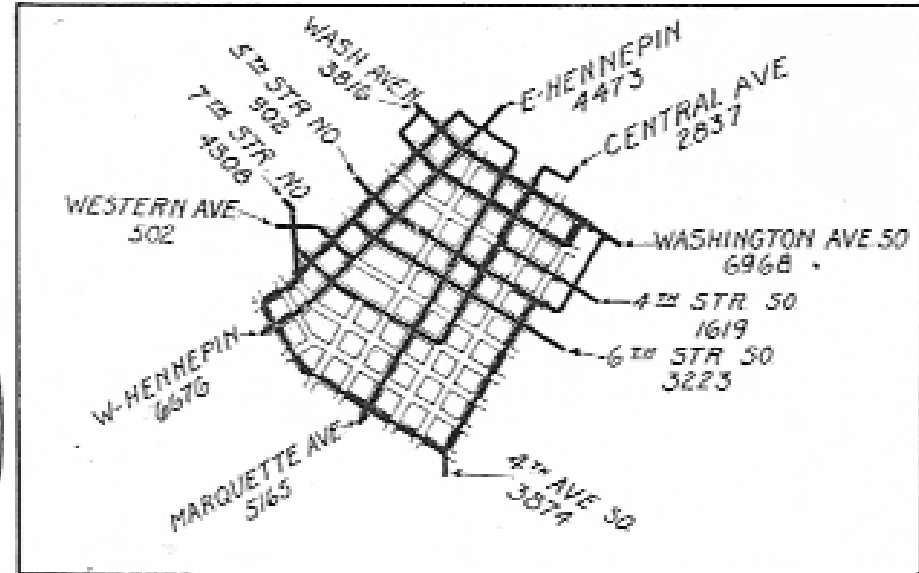


SHOWN IN FIGURE OF  
CITY MAP

DIVISION AHEAD OF CITY PLANNING  
IN THE PLANNING DIVISION IMPACTED  
BY CHANGING THE HIGHWAY SYSTEM



CAR LINE DISTRIBUTION OF  
PASSENGERS OUTBOUND



TRUNK LINE DISTRIBUTION OF  
PASSENGERS OUTBOUND FROM LOOP



**100 Years Later**  
**Minneapolis Transit Frequency in 1911 and 2012**

| Minute Service<br>Line—     | AM Peak<br>1911 | AM Peak<br>2012 | Midday<br>1911 | Midday<br>2012 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Bloomington Avenue          | 3               | 15              | 5              | 15             |
| Bryant Avenue               | 3               | 10              | 10             | 15             |
| Bryn Mawr                   | 5               | 30              | 15             | 30             |
| Como                        | 7               | 4               | 7              | 10             |
| Cedar Avenue                | 4               | 15              | 10             | 20             |
| Camden                      | 4               | none            | 10             | none           |
| Central Avenue              | 2               | 10              | 5              | 10             |
| Columbia Heights            | 10              | 10              | 10             | 10             |
| Chicago                     | 2               | 7.5             | 3              | 7.5            |
| Eighth Street SE            | 10              | 12              | 10             | 20             |
| Emerson Avenue N.           | 4               | 9               | 10             | 7.5            |
| Nicollet                    | 3               | 7               | 3              | 10             |
| Fourth Avenue               | 2               | 20              | 5              | 30             |
| Grand Avenue                | 10              | 30              | 10             | 60             |
| Interurban                  | 3               | 10              | 4              | 10             |
| Kenwood                     | 10              | 30              | 10             | none           |
| Lake Harriet                | 2               | 5               | 5              | 10             |
| Lake Street                 | 3               | 10              | 5              | 7.5            |
| Monroe                      | 5               | 15              | 10             | 30             |
| Minnehaha                   | 3               | 30              | 5              | 30             |
| Oak Street                  | 7               | 20              | 7              | 20             |
| Plymouth Avenue             | 6               | 30              | 10             | 30             |
| 6th Avenue N                | 5               | 10              | 10             | 15             |
| 2nd Street NE               | 6               | 15              | 10             | 30             |
| Broadway Crosstown          | 4               | none            | 10             | none           |
| Washburn Park (50-Nicollet) | 5               | 15              | 10             | 15             |
| Glenwood)                   | 6               | 30              | 10             | 30             |

**Despite some route changes, the Metro Transit bus system in Minneapolis still bears a strong resemblance to the streetcar system. This table shows how service frequencies have changed in a century.**

## Newspaper Stories

Here are more streetcar stories from Minneapolis and St. Paul newspapers.

### April 22, 1914 Better Interurban Service Plans Told

Methods whereby street car service on the interurban line between Minneapolis and St. Paul might be improved were presented at the University Club Monday. Four plans for the improvement of service were presented. These included the use of express cars, an elevated structure, a subway in the business districts of the two cities, and lastly a deep tunnel and

subway.

"The present slow service between the two cities results from the large number of stops in the business districts, not in the Midway district," said consulting engineer Edward P. Burch. "The time between Seven Corners in Minneapolis and Rice Street in St. Paul, 7.3 miles, can be readily made with ten stops at 22 miles per hour, or in 20 minutes. The present speed with 25 stops is only 30 minutes, or about 14 miles per hour.

Expenditures for side tracks where express cars could pass local cars, for four tracks for local and express cars, or for an elevated railway to get a

higher schedule speed than 22 miles per hour in the Midway district would not materially help in the solution.

In the first plan, the improvement of the present service, the following were suggested:

1) Heavier electric motive power equipment for rapid acceleration, higher safe running speeds and powerful braking.

2) Keying up of the interurban service, no dragging, superior running rights for express cars over local cars, no flagging of cars over railroad crossings by conductors, and a "step lively" method of handling passengers in and out of front and rear openings.

3) No stops between the Minneapolis business district and Seven Corners, alternate stops between the university and Dale Street and few stops between Dale Street and the St. Paul business district.

4) Express cars painted a different color from local cars.

5) As a development and betterment, rerouting over new tracks on 3rd or 4th Street at the Minneapolis end, and over new tracks parallel to University Avenue at the St. Paul end.

### Dec. 31, 1915

#### Express Cars

So far the so-called "express" street car service tried out on St. Paul car lines has proven sufficiently successful to warrant the experiment being extended and it is probably that it soon will be put into operation here (Minneapolis).

The express service in reality does not mean any increased speed but is aimed to more evenly distribute the load. If put into operation on the Como-Harriet south bound line, for example, the car would make no stop between 10th Street and Lake Street.

Of course this car would travel no faster than the short line car, making all stops, but the object desired is to require the passengers desiring to get off north of Lake Street to board short line cars, leaving the long line cars for the long trip passengers.

The company experimented on the

Selby line in St. Paul. The cars made no stops between Seven Corners and Dale Street. Citizens asked that the no stop zone be extended to Snelling Avenue. This has been done.

### July 17, 1899

#### Mothers on Street Cars

"There, that's over with, and it's a great load off my mind," said the street car conductor, as he got back to the rear platform and made vigorous use of his handkerchief on his face and neck.

"You mean collecting fares on a crowded car?" asked a passenger.

"I mean getting through with the seven women and 16 children I have on this trip," he explained. "Luck happened to be with me, and I'm only hoping that I may get through the day all right. I've been laid off for a week, you know."

"For what?"

"For doubting a mother's word in regard to the age of a child. I've got four children at home, and most anybody would say that I ought to be something of a judge. If it wasn't for the spotters I'd pass all children as being under three years of age."

"You have to collect half fare for all over that age, eh?"

"I have to try to, and there is where the trouble comes in. Not one mother in 20 is willing to pay any fare at all for anything under a boy who is just ready to get out of knee breeches. Of the 16 children on this car all but two are certainly five years old, and yet I collected only three half fares. If there is a spotter on this car I'm booked for another lay-off, but it was either that or a row with the mothers. When I come to a mother who shuts her jaws and gives me the icy glare, I realize that her mind is made up, and it's either let her beat me or have a row."

"But why do they kick?"

"For various reasons. When you have dead-headed a child for three years it's pretty hard to begin paying fare. As a rule, too, anybody will beat a street car if possible and feel no shame over it. The woman who got me laid

off had a son five years old with her. She had been riding on my car for months with that kid and passing him off for not quite three years, when I thought to do the smart thing for the company. I insisted on her paying fare for him, but I lost in the shuffle. She went to headquarters and complained of my impudence and instead of collecting five cents for the company I was \$12 out of pocket."

"And do mothers deliberately lie to you to save a fare?"

"You ought to run a car for just one day. A woman who wouldn't lie to a neighbor on her life will turn a conductor down without the least hesitation. It is not considered a sin to do that. I have a brother who was running a car on this line up to a month ago. A woman tried to pass a five year old for nothing and he insisted on half fare and got it. She turned out to be the general manager's wife, and, of course, the conductor got the bounce. What is that old saying about truth?"

"That it is mighty and will prevail."

"Yes. I remember, but the man who said it lived before the days of street cars. I'm telling you, sir, that of the folks who travel by car, man or woman, only about one in ten is thinking of truth, and even he is wondering how he can work off a plugged quarter or even a lead nickel on the conductor."

#### **Feb. 4, 1912 Motorman Stops Car With Reverse Lever in St. Paul Tunnel**

Ellsworth Schindel, a motorman 17 years in the service of the Twin City Rapid Transit Company, stopped car No. 1444 eight times with the reverse lever in the Selby avenue tunnel in St. Paul yesterday. The trial was for the benefit of Coroner Jones and his jury, who were passengers. Horace Lowry, general manager of the company, and L. S. Cairns, superintendent of the St. Paul division, were in charge of the party. The trolley was removed from the wire when the test was made, the air brake was not touched, and the hand brake, which had failed to work successfully before the tunnel was

reached, was abandoned. The motorman depended entirely on the reverse lever.

The car started into the tunnel at the rate of 15 miles an hour, corresponding to the speed at which the fated car started last Monday before one man met death and others were injured in the collision. The experiment yesterday lacked thrills. The first time the reverse lever was applied the car jolted and slowed down to two miles an hour. The men on the car, however, were accustomed to this because in the trip to the tunnel on another car the reverse lever was applied several times to demonstrate its function to the jury.

Eight stops were made during the descent of the tunnel grade. When the lever was switched to the "stop" notch the electricity generated on dead short-circuits through each motor, building up series dynamos. Though there were eight distinct jars as the car slowed down every time the lever was applied, none of them threw persons forward in the car or caused excitement. Had it not been for the fact that the test had been arranged, the occupants of the car would probably have felt that the variations in speed were merely the routine method of getting the car down the grade.

At 2:30 yesterday the party that was to make the test trip met in Dr. Jones' office in the St. Paul courthouse and shortly after boarded a chartered car bearing the number 1441. A series of experiments were made on this car before a Selby-Lake car was picked at random and used as the actual test car. The lights were turned on so the company could see when the trolley was on and off.

After the demonstration, Mr. Protzeller testified that in his opinion the reverse lever had not been applied by the motorman on the fatal run of the runaway car, and that both the airbrake and the hand brake were unavailable at the time of the accident.

Note: It was later discovered that the runaway car had a faulty brake cylinder.

## **Service Trucks**

There wasn't enough space in the last issue of *Twin City Lines*, which was devoted to work cars, to discuss service trucks. Trucks first appeared around World War I, and streetcar companies quickly realized the flexibility they provided. Not tied to the rails, they could assist wherever needed, minimizing the delay to scheduled streetcars. They could bypass downed overhead wires and blocked or flooded tracks that would have prevented a work car from even reaching its destination. Wire trucks appear to have been the first, joined later by general purpose service trucks.







Here are three generations of wire trucks, starting with an unidentified one (above left), then #105 (opposite), #134 (below and above center) and #221 (above right). Below right: This is the earliest service truck we know of, which also appears on page 14.







Left: A service truck is on scene at 42nd Avenue S., just south of Minnehaha Avenue, where a Fort Snelling car has managed to collide with a Milwaukee Road locomotive. Note the sand car on the northbound track. Minneapolis Star-Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

Below: Later model service trucks at Snelling Shops. St. Paul Pioneer Press photo (lower right), Minnesota Historical Society collection.

Opposite: In 1951, a northbound Grand-Monroe PCC car has derailed at Lake and Nicollet. A service truck is attempting to tow it back onto the rails. This is a companion to the photo on the rear cover of the Summer 2009 issue. Minneapolis Star-Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.









## More Newspaper Stories

11-26-43

### Keeping Buses and Streetcars Clean is Daily Job of 47 Twin Cities Women

Forty-seven Twin Cities women have a cleaning job on their hands every day that makes a housewife's Spring cleaning look like a minor dusting job.

These women, along with five men supervisors, see to it that thousands of St. Paulites who daily commute on street cars and buses ride on shining cars, walk on clean floors and sit on dusted seats.

They are members of the Twin City Lines cleaning crews that keep buses and street cars of the system looking spic and span. Working in two shifts, these crews keep the cars in shape through all kinds of weather conditions.

Their daily chore is to sweep and dust every one of the lines' 900 odd

buses and trams. At least once a week the street cars' and buses' exteriors and interiors are washed. Once a month they receive a general cleaning.

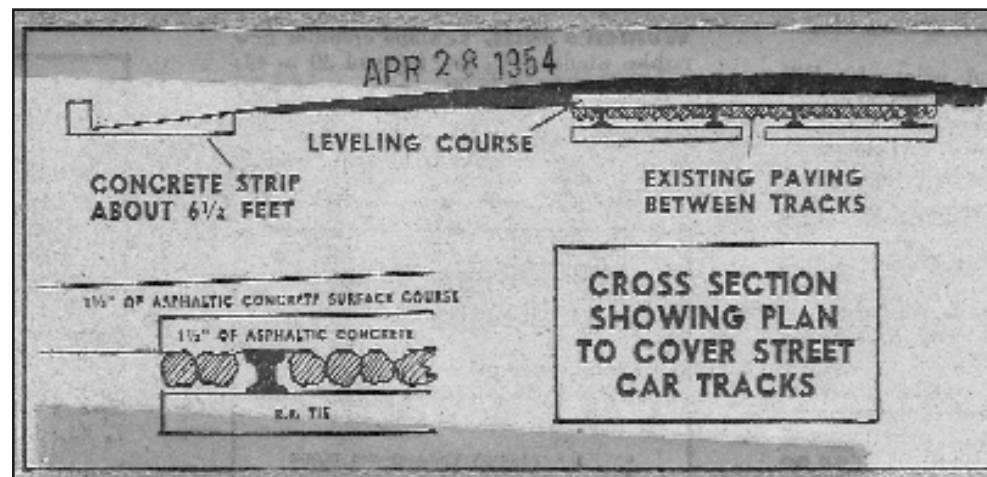
The crews' pride and joy is an automatic washing device that completely scrubs a bus in three minutes. It takes a man or woman one hour to wash a bus or street car by hand.

Buses pass through the machine which first sprays the sides and tops, then scrubs the bus with four nine-foot brushes and finally rinses the entire vehicle.

With special chemicals causing quick drying, all that it is necessary is to shine the windshields. The company has three more of these outfits on order, but has been unable to get them because of the war. In the post-war period L. G. Barnes, superintendent of equipment, hopes to have one of these in each car barn and bus station.

Employees have the gigantic job of cleaning buses and street cars down to

Streetcar cleaner Mayme Bilek, on and off duty



This diagram shows the City of Minneapolis plan for paving over the tracks after abandonment.

a timed system. For the cars' and bus' daily cleaning it takes a worker six minutes to sweep and twenty minutes to dust a tram or bus. Incidentally, Barnes reports, the women are more thorough cleaners. Probably the domestic touch, he says.

One hour is required to wash the outside of a tram, while it takes two workers eight hours to completely give the car or bus the general cleaning every inch of both the inside and the outside of a car.

Greatest bane of the car cleaners is gum on upholstery and the cane seats. Another is the ripping of seats by commuters.

The 52 employees work in two shifts in six car barns and bus stations.

Barnes, in charge of all cleaning in the Twin Cities, reports that five of his women are 25-year veterans, with the others being added during the last two years as the armed forces and war work drained the men from his staff.

4-28-54

### Pavement crowning

Here's how the city engineering department is covering the abandoned streetcar tracks on Minneapolis streets.

The streets are being given a "crown" which will raise the driving surface about three inches. Over the tracks is laid what is called a 'leveling course' of approximately one-and-a

half inches of asphaltic concrete. Over that leveling course and tapering toward the curbs will be another layer of asphaltic concrete, also about one-and-a half inches at the center.

Also, six and a half foot parking strips will be put on each side of the streets where none now exist. The pavement parking strips rise a little higher than the adjoining pavement, and the crowning takes off from there.

July 1, 1898

### The Como Interurban comes to St. Anthony Park

Aside from the great convenience this new line will prove to Minneapolis people who wish to visit Como Park and the state fair grounds, the new interurban will be the greatest blessing to St. Anthony Park people. There was a time when no suburb in the vicinity of the Twin Cities had fairer prospects of becoming a popular residence district than that same park. Its location was all that the most exacting could ask. There were hilltops and hillsides, and a wealth of forest trees that no scheme of planting could have matched.

The old interurban line (via University Avenue in 1890) was the doom of St. Anthony Park. It may not



have been so intended. Before that interurban line was built St. Anthony Park enjoyed the advantage of half-hourly train service on the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific railroads. The Park dwellers carried monthly commuters' tickets; they met at the trains, went to and from business together, and in every respect put on all the style they were entitled to as residents of the only fashionable suburb of St. Paul. They did not patronize the street cars because they did not have to. The quicker steam cars were good enough for them. The interurban did not get much business from St. Anthony Park, but it got all the business there was to be had between Minneapolis and St. Paul, and when it did that there was nothing for the railroads in running suburban trains. The trains were taken off, and the pretty suburban station in the Park fell into neglect. The Northern Pacific now has four trains a day which stop at St. Anthony Park station, and those are mostly for the accommodation of stockmen who have business at the transfer or at the stockyards. A motherly woman sits in the ticket office and knits to while away the time. Up on the hill the two-story station of the Great Northern is boarded up and a sign proclaims that it is for rent. The wires still run into the deserted telegraph office, but the keys are still.

There was nothing for the property owners of St. Anthony Park to do but make the best of it. The steam roads deserted them for good; the interurban was a mile away, a dreadfully long way on a cold morning or after a deep snow. The extensive improvements which had been planned or which were underway were either dropped or were finished up in some cheap manner. Corner lots which had been held at thousands dropped to hundreds, and found a flat market at that. Some of them would have been donated gladly to anyone who would have paid the taxes on them. Some of the business men who lived there had to remove to locations where they could reach their places of business without so much delay and inconvenience.

## EARLY BUSES

Even though MSM's mission does not include preserving Minnesota's bus history, we do some of it anyway. Buses appeared just after World War I and quickly began competing with, and sometimes replacing, the streetcars. It's hard to tell the streetcar story without touching on buses. Recently Dave French acquired and donated a 1924 booklet of Minnesota bus schedules published by the Minnesota Motor Bus Association. It may not include every Minnesota bus service, but it certainly comes close. The surprise is the explosive growth of bus service in only five years.

Union bus depots had been built in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The services divided themselves into two types—frequent urban service and less frequent over-the-road service. This 1924 snapshot reveals an industry in its early stages of development. Many of the urban services were directly competing with TCRT, and in the couple of years TCRT would buy out most of them to secure its urban service monopoly. Coast to coast service was still years away.

In the Twin Cities metro area, transit service was being provided by these carriers:

Twin City Motor Bus was still independent. In 1926 it would become TCRT's bus subsidiary. In 1924 it was running between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul every 5 minutes from 7 AM to 7 PM. Surprisingly, 10-minute frequency lasted until 2 AM. Half-hourly service ran between St. Paul and White Bear Lake, with six daily round trips extending to Taylors Falls. These ran in direct competition with Northern Pacific commuter trains.

Terminal Motor Coach appears to have replaced the Burlington's recently-discontinued commuter trains between St. Paul and St. Paul Park with hourly buses. Two daily trips continued down the Mississippi to Wabasha.

Brown Bus Lines also ran a 10-minute frequency between the two

downtowns. It's unclear which route it used. There were buses between the downtowns via University Avenue, Como Avenue and Marshall-Lake Street and it's unclear which company ran which. Brown Bus competed with TCRT between St. Paul, North St. Paul and Mahtomedi. The company ran 15 minute all-day service from St. Paul to South St. Paul, although this was probably via West St. Paul and the area atop the hill, not via Concord Avenue where the streetcars ran.

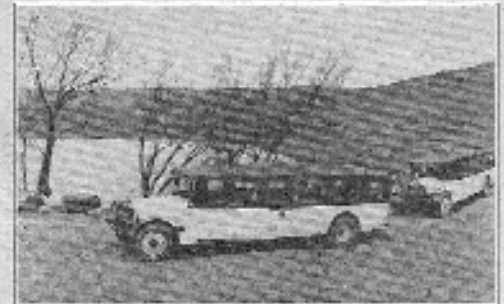
Kenney Bus Company connected Minneapolis with Hopkins and Glen Lake via Excelsior Boulevard, competing with TCRT to Hopkins and Glenn Lake.

Boulevard Transportation was named for Wayzata Boulevard, and ran half hourly service from Minneapolis to Wayzata and Mound.

Jefferson Highway Transportation (now Jefferson Lines) and Red Bus Line ran a joint hourly schedule from Minneapolis to St. Cloud via Osseo and Anoka, competing with the Minneapolis, Anoka & Cuyuna Range interurbans for Anoka business.

On the Iron Range, Range Rapid Transit offered half-hourly buses between Hibbing and Eveleth in competition with the Mesaba Railway interurban.

# Travel by Bus



A publication issued for the information and convenience of the traveling public by the Minnesota Motor Bus Association.

Joint schedules of member lines are correct, the service dependable and comprehensive.

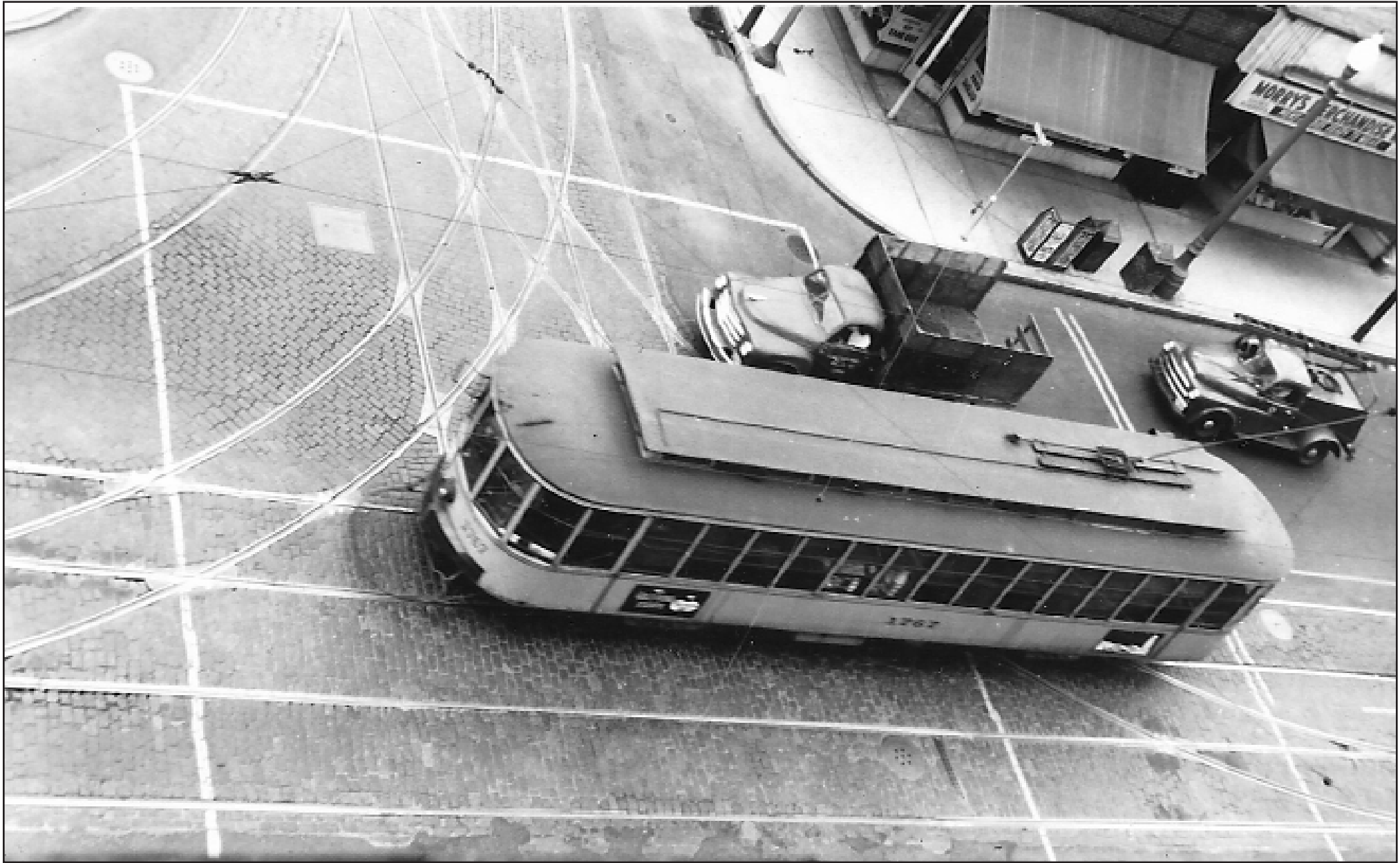
***Index on Inside Front Cover***

**Schedules Correct to  
July 15, 1924**

*Subject to change without notice.*

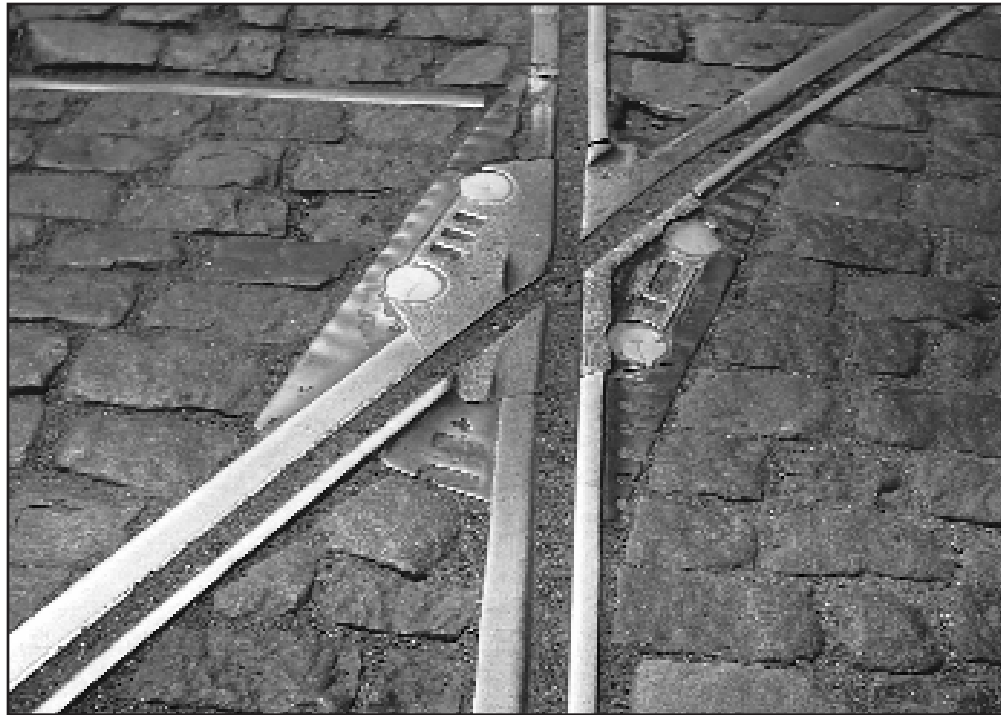
## *Special Work*

Special work is the term for switches, crossings and any other unusual trackwork. There is something sculptural about street trackage, especially when configured in unusual ways. Here are some samples.



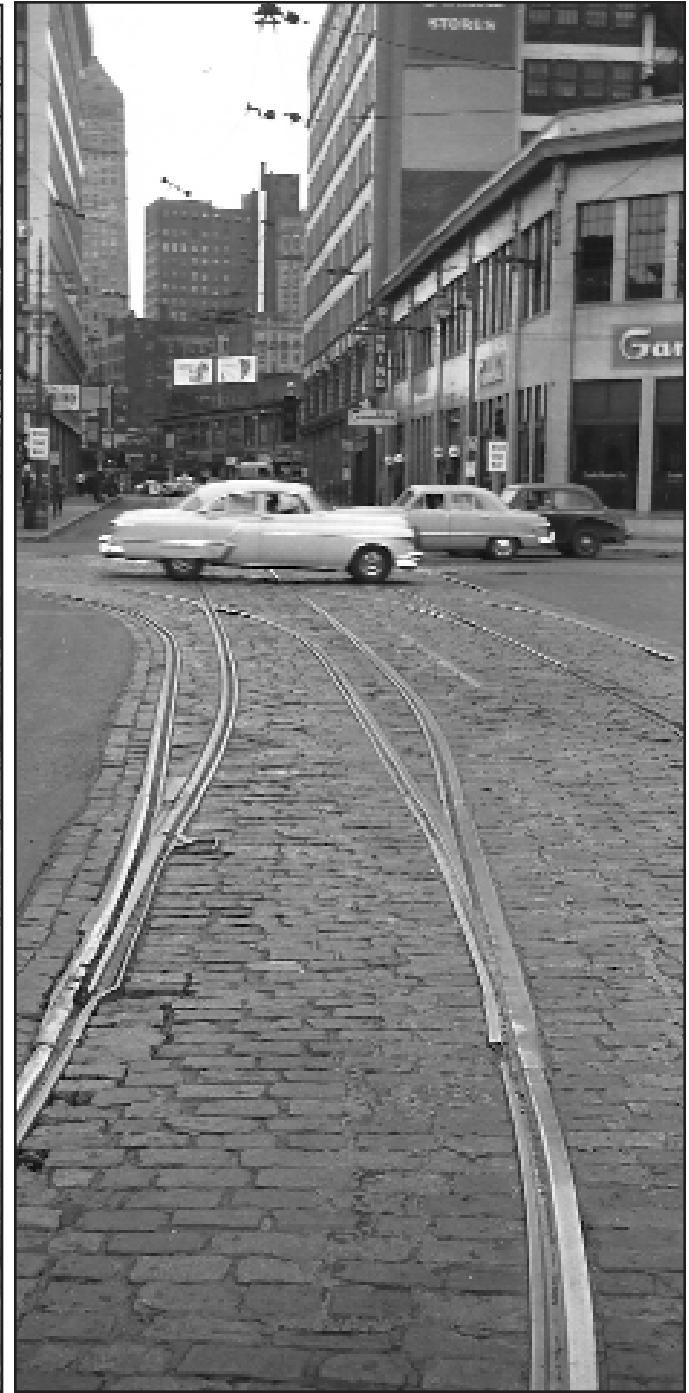
In 1954 Ed Nelson looked down on the 11th and Hennepin intersection from the TCRT general offices. The streetcar is southbound on Hennepin. Note the stubs of tracks on 11th Street that formerly crossed Hennepin.





Above and below left: As abandonment approached, Bob Schumacher recorded the details of the soon-to-be-gone streetcars, including these track views. Below right: In this unusual arrangement looking north on Central Avenue, the streetcar tracks narrowed to one for the Soo Line crossing. The third track belonged to the Minneapolis Filtration Plant railway. Southbound freight moves to the Soo interchange ran against the flow of auto traffic. Jim Kreuzberger photo.





**More unusual track. Left: 1st Avenue NE in front of East Side Station. Center: The gauntlet track (two tracks overlapping one another, but never connecting) on Bryant Avenue at Minnehaha Creek. Right: Looking south on 8th Street at a switch from westbound 1st Avenue N. in downtown Minneapolis. All Jim Kreuzberger photos.**





## BILL, says:

I saw a lot of old friends and plenty of new faces, too, during the recent cold snap.

Most of these folks will probably become "regulars" soon, if I read the signs at all.

Seems to me we have a chance to do some real selling this time, so we can keep these customers when the war is over.

Let's be as friendly and accommodating as possible to these folks. It's easier to keep an old customer than to make a new one.

*Bill*



## BILL, says:

From here on in, folks will have more choice about how they travel. In other words, they won't have to ride with us if they don't want to. Let's keep them wanting to ride with us by providing those "extras" in courtesy and friendliness. I can promise you it's our best bet for the future.

*Bill*

## Bill Evolves-- and Reproduces!

About 1939 TCRT changed uniform hats from the traditional pillbox to the flat bus driver style. Motorman Bill handled the transition smoothly, and continued to dispense wisdom from car cards, newspaper ads and the pages of Bus & Trolley News, the employee newsletter produced jointly by the labor union and the credit union.

A few years later Bill's Boy appeared. His function was to promote Bus & Trolley News advertising and urge readers to patronize those businesses.

Three of them were cafes across the street from Lake Street Station.

## BILL'S BOY

SAYS:



## Attention! Conductors and Motormen

We greatly appreciate your past cooperation in keeping window shades UP on the street car windows where we place advertisements. Now, with warm weather with us again, your continued support **IN KEEPING THEM UP** will be most helpful to us and appreciated.

BILL'S BOY.

### CHRIS' CAFE

In your spare time, boys, stop in and see Chris. He will treat you right.

2201 East Lake Minneapolis

### "THE STATION"

2209 1/2 E. Lake Street  
OPEN ALL NIGHT  
Sandwiches — Coffee  
GARRY MATSON, Prop.

Breakfast Short Orders

### TROLLEY CAFE

2217 E. Lake  
Home Cooked Meals  
Sandwiches — Good Coffee  
We Appreciate Your Business  
Open 5:00 A. M. Weekdays



## BILL'S BOY SAYS:

Mom and Dad like to read the Car Cards because they advertise good products, made by folks who help support the Street Car Company, through advertising. Just yesterday Dad bought Mom a new gas range at Routells. Mom says it's a beauty for the price! Gee! Why doncha see what bargains these other Street Car advertisers have to offer now?

## A Scheduling Trick on the Highland Line

Duluth's 7th Avenue West Incline ran every 15 minutes. The isolated Highland streetcar line that fed the top of the Incline ran every 30 minutes most of the day, connecting with every second Incline car. However, during the morning and afternoon rush hours, a second Highland car was deployed and the line ran every 15 minutes, meeting every Incline car. The extra service lasted for two hours each morning and afternoon. For quite a few years this meant deadheading an additional motorman twice a day from the carhouse at 28th Avenue W. and Superior Street to the top of the Incline. The Incline and Highland line almost never turned a profit, so controlling costs was important.

In order to reduce costs, the company devised a clever and unorthodox way to eliminate that second motorman during rush hours. One-way Incline running time was 8 minutes, followed by 7 minutes of layover by the two incline cars at the top and bottom stations before the next one-way trip.

On the Highland line one-way running time was 10 minutes, followed by 5 minutes of layover before the next one-way trip. When two cars were running on the single-track Highland line, they met at a siding only five blocks and three minutes up the hill from the Incline station. It was the only passing siding on the line.

The schedule makers realized that the Incline conductor had enough layover time to walk his passengers to the Highland car and run the streetcar uphill to the passing siding. There he would switch to the downhill car, run it back to the Incline station, walk the passengers to the Incline car, and pilot it down to Superior Street. Meanwhile the Highland motorman was shuttling back and forth between the siding and the north end of the Highland line. Result? 15-minute service without adding a second motorman during rush hours.



**In 1952, a streetcar was painted to promote military recruitment and christened at Snelling Shops. St. Paul Pioneer Press photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.**



## Crewing Lowry's Private Car

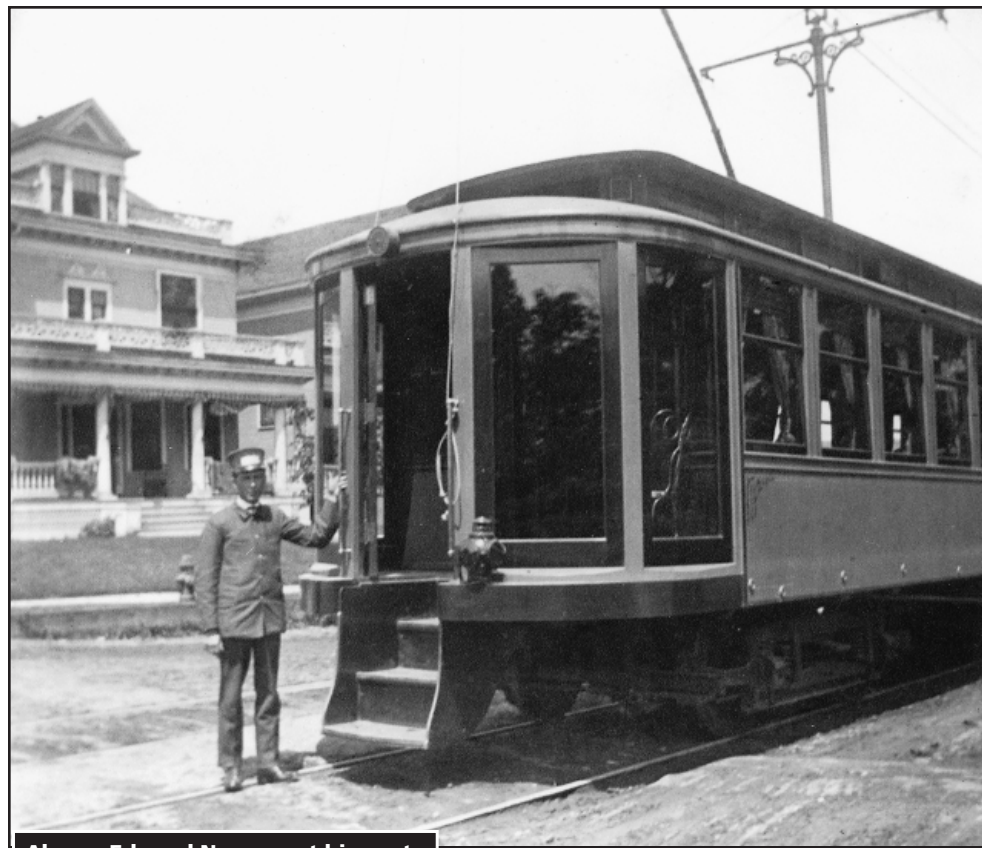
This is an excerpt from Edward P. Norman's autobiography, as reprinted in the Minneapolis Tribune. Norman was a TCRT conductor from 1898 to 1903. That's him in the photo at right. He wrote this in 1941.

"The company was changing from the small type car to the fine (yellow) car with two pairs of trucks with a capacity of 100 persons. These cars were built in company shops at 31st and Nicollet Ave. where I was stationed. Minneapolis people believed that no other city could boast of such fine cars as our company built. This I believed to be the truth.

One car was the private car of the Thomas Lowry family. This car was finely appointed, beautifully upholstered, with electric kitchen, sideboard with liquors, wines and cigars, etc., with entrance at the rear end in center. This car was used only by the families of the higher officials, and especially on occasions when Eastern celebrities—Mr. Charles Schwab, Mr. H. C. Frick or the Governor, etc.—were being entertained. No wonder this job as conductor of the "Private" was a high ambition. So, when I was given this assignment in the middle of my streetcar career, I could hardly have been "touched with a 10-foot pole."

During the State Legislature sessions, every day we would pick up either Vice President Goodrich or General Manager W. J. Hield to be taken to St. Paul. There they would remain at some club where they held meetings with various prominent members of the Legislature (behind closed doors) to look after the interests of the company. Of course, it was necessary for these officials in the interest of the company they served, as the Legislature had much to do in regulating the utilities of the State, including street car lines. Then we would call for them at some agreed point at midnight. Such was the life.





Above: Edward Norman at his post.



On the whole, car men were not contented. In the idle time we would sit around deploring our condition, and every day someone would report a man quitting "for a better job." This effected me, too. There was no union. After all, the men, even on the private

car, were nothing but "flunkey". On the days before elections, our bosses handed us cards on which were written the names of candidates we were expected to vote for."









# MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

PO Box 16509  
Minneapolis, MN 55416-0509  
[www.TrolleyRide.org](http://www.TrolleyRide.org)

August 2021

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